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The United Nations Development Fund for Women

Strategy and business plan, 2000-2003

Summary

The present document contains the Strategy and Business Plan of the United Nations Development Fund for Women for the years 2000-2003. The Plan has been developed in line with the mandate and goals of the Fund (chapter II) and with the vision it has developed for the future (chapter III). It is based on the opportunities and challenges offered by the external and internal environments (chapter IV). On this basis, the Plan defines the strategic objectives of the Fund for the period 2000-2003 (chapter V) and the strategic areas of work (chapter VI and table 2 of the addendum DP/2000/15/Add.1). The goals of the Fund during the Strategy and Business Plan period are structured around five strategic objectives. The Plan further identifies the human and financial resource requirements to transform it into reality. Chapter VII contains a recommendation for Executive Board action.

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I. Introduction

1. In its decision 97/18 of 23 May 1997, the UNDP Executive Board endorsed the first Strategy and Business Plan (SBP) of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for the period 1997-1999 (DP/1997/18). The Plan outlined overarching goals, programmes and strategies to guide UNIFEM work in support of the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment agreed to at the series of United Nations world conferences held in the 1990s, particularly the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

2. The present document provides a brief review of UNIFEM experiences in implementing its Strategy and Business Plan for 1997-1999 and presents the Plan proposed for the next four-year period (2000-2003). In setting out the next SBP, UNIFEM takes into account the results achieved, lessons learned, and gaps remaining from the previous SBP, as well as the larger and changing social, economic, political and cultural contexts that influence the organization's efforts — and those of its partners — to achieve gender equality.

3. The SBP 2000-2003 will retain a number of the framing principles designed during the last programming period. In particular, the organization will continue to work towards its overarching goal by focusing on the three thematic areas and five core strategies identified in the previous Plan, which support an innovative and catalytic approach to the work of UNIFEM, as shown in the charts below.

4. With regard to the SBP 2000-2003, there are three critical factors that have an immediate and direct impact on future UNIFEM plans and programmes. The impact of each of these is described in chapters III and IV. They include:

(a) Progress achieved, gaps remaining and lessons learned from the SBP 1997-1999;

(b) The United Nations reform agenda and the UNDP transition process;

(c) The five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action.

II. The mandate and goal of UNIFEM

5. The foresight of those involved in establishing UNIFEM is demonstrated by the continuing relevance of the organization's mandate, set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 39/125 of 14 December 1984. In addressing ways to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, the General Assembly anticipated the current emphasis on innovation, gender-mainstreaming and inter-agency collaboration by specifying that the resources of the Fund should: first, serve as a catalyst, with the goal of ensuring the appropriate involvement of women in mainstream development activities; and second, to support innovative and experimental activities benefiting women, in line with national and regional priorities.

6. The mandate on which UNIFEM was founded has been augmented by successive General Assembly resolutions and decisions that have provided additional strength and substance upon which to base its programme. Moreover, the Beijing Platform for Action, endorsed by more than 180 of the world's Governments, refers specifically to the critical role that UNIFEM should play in achieving gender equality. Paragraph 335 affirms the Fund's mandate to increase options and opportunities for women's economic and social development in developing countries by providing technical and financial assistance to incorporate the women's dimension into development at all levels. In paragraph 25 of his report on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women: action for equality development and peace (A/50/744), the Secretary-General encouraged the full utilization of UNIFEM capacity to provide operational support for follow-up action at the national level, and to exercise a catalytic role in promoting effective United Nations coordination at the country level, through the resident coordinator system.

7. Two General Assembly resolutions are particularly relevant. Under the guidance of resolution 50/166 of 22 December 1995, the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against

Chart 1. The three areas of concern

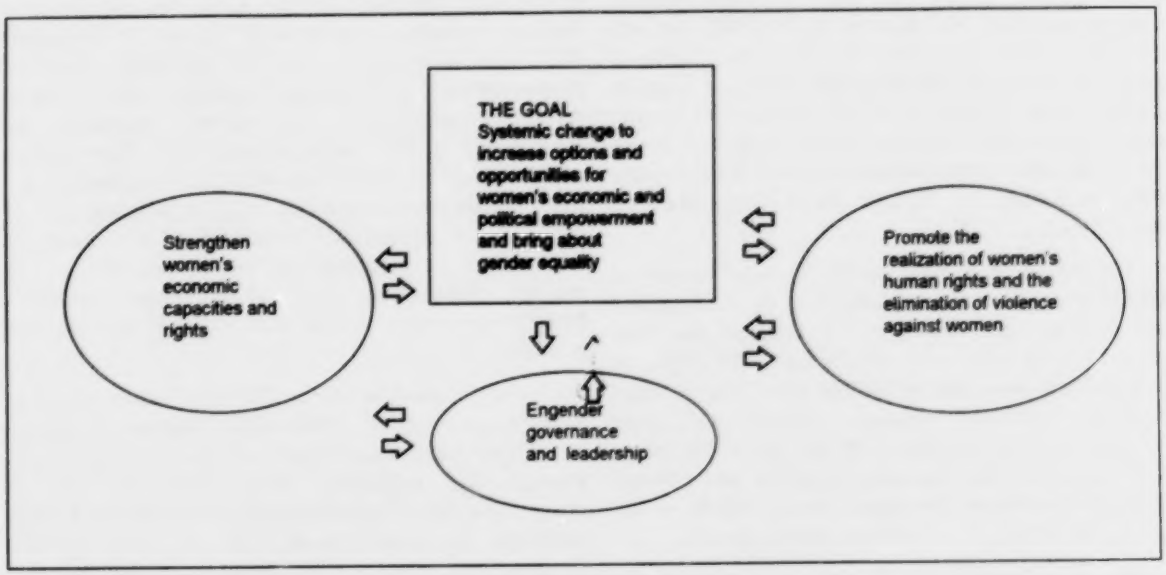
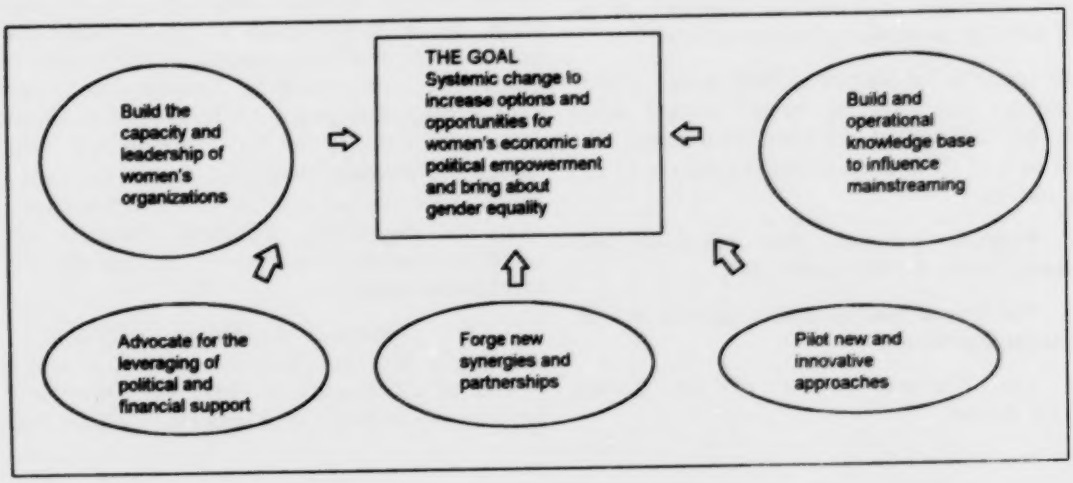

THE GOAL
Systemic change to increase options and opportunities for women's economic and political empowerment and bring about gender equality
Strengthen women's economic capacities and rights
Promote the realization of women's human rights and the elimination of violence against women
Engender governance and leadership

Chart 2. The five strategies


THE GOAL
Systemic change to increase options and opportunities for women's economic and political empowerment and bring about gender equality
Build the capacity and leadership of women's organizations
Build and operational knowledge base to influence mainstreaming
Advocate for the leveraging of political and financial support
Forge new synergies and partnerships
Pilot new and innovative approaches

Women was established at UNIFEM in 1996. The Trust Fund has become a pivotal mechanism through which to focus activities, stimulate cross-regional learning and the sharing of experiences, bring together United Nations organizations, and mobilize resources to support innovative activities designed to eliminate gender-based violence. More recently, in its resolution 54/136 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly outlined key areas for the future work of UNIFEM, including strengthened programmes relating to: conflict prevention and resolution; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the elimination of violence against women; and gender-mainstreaming in United Nations operational activities.

III. Key factors in the formulation of the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003

A. Progress achieved, gaps remaining and lessons learned from the SBP 1997-1999

8. The SBP has provided a powerful reference point for the organization over the past three years. In setting out six key objectives, three thematic areas, and five core strategies to guide UNIFEM work, it established specific parameters for UNIFEM programmes and operations. At the same time, the parameters were set broadly enough to allow the organization the flexibility it needs to respond to opportunities as they arise in order to play a catalytic and innovative role that is relevant to differing national and regional realities while supporting global commitments.

9. The assessment by UNIFEM of results achieved in its first three-year business plan drew on a number of complementary efforts to strengthen the organization's ability to learn from its activities and to work as a knowledge-provider on gender equality. Programmatic and thematic evaluations have yielded critical information about successful approaches and areas needing attention. Regular strategic planning exercises — undertaken at the regional, global, and section levels — have provided key opportunities for self-assessment and mid-course corrections. Ongoing feedback from and consultation with UNIFEM key stakeholders — United Nations organizations, Governments, and civil society organizations — have helped to identify trends and priorities, particularly through the preparatory process for Beijing+5, that parallel the formulation of the SBP 2000-2003.

10. Social-change objectives relating to gender equality require a significant investment of time and effort. The longer-term impacts from programme-related initiatives could therefore not be measured over the three-year period of the SBP 1997-1999; the SBP 2000-2003 therefore focuses on short-term results and medium-term outcomes.

11. The table below provides a summary of the overarching results and the gaps and challenges that UNIFEM has identified during the first SBP. Table 1 in the addendum to the present document contains a more detailed and representative listing of short and medium-term results in the programmatic areas in which UNIFEM works.

12. UNIFEM results have had significant impact. Key short-term results include increased political will, expanded awareness, involvement of new constituencies, the development of critical skills among women's organizations and the identification of new approaches to documenting and disseminating lessons learned. In the medium term, UNIFEM can point to numerous examples to demonstrate how its programmes and approaches have generated new and increased resources for gender equality, stimulated new or strengthened legislation and policies to support gender equality, increased the availability and use of data disaggregated by sex, and supported new structures to increase the sustainability of gender interventions.

B. The United Nations reform agenda and the UNDP transition process

13. Reform and change have been hallmarks of the past three years. The release, in 1997, of the Secretary-General's reform agenda created new opportunities and challenges for women's empowerment and gender equality. The UNDP Change Management 2000 process, followed by the work of the Transition Team that took place from June to December 1999, are also dynamic factors that affect UNIFEM programme and strategies.

Strategy and Business Plan, 1997-1999: Results and challenges

SBP Objectives[a]	*Short- term results*	*Medium-term results*	*Challenges*
1. Increase options and opportunities for women, especially those living in poverty, through focused programming in three thematic areas: economic empowerment; governance and leadership; and women's human rights and the elimination of gender-based violence 2. Strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to support women's empowerment and gender-mainstreaming in its policies and programmes	• Increased political will • Expanded awareness of gender inequality and mechanisms to address it by decision makers, men, and the general public • New constituencies involved and sectors mobilized • New skills developed to support women's empowerment and rights • Increased capacity of women's organizations and networks • Identification of new approaches to documenting and disseminating lessons learned	• New and increased resources for gender equality • New or strengthened legislation and policies to support gender equality • Stronger implementation of international agreements • Increased availability and use of data disaggregated by sex • New structures established to promote gender-mainstreaming and monitor the accountability of various stakeholders at all levels • Increase in requests for replication of programmes and approaches and in sharing experiences across regions	• Strengthen mechanisms to promote and monitor the accountability of various stakeholders at all levels and progress in fulfilling the Beijing Platform for Action • Developing a stronger focus on building women's economic literacy and rights, as well as on engendering the macroeconomic framework • Expand the network and capacities of UNIFEM field-based programmes and staff
3. Strengthen the Fund's effectiveness by incorporating the principles of a learning organization and building strategic partnerships that enhance field-based operations	• Innovative uses of new information/ communication technologies increased knowledge, partnerships and constituencies for gender-equality initiatives • New strategic partnership models developed with multilateral organizations, the private sector, programme and donor countries, the media and women's networks	• UNIFEM staff and partners' deepened understanding of organizational culture and systems needed to support ongoing learning and knowledge management • Replication, adaptation and assessment of new partnership models generate new financial and technical resources to support gender equality	• Ensuring that UNIFEM staff and partners have access to state-of-the-art information/ communication technologies and skills to support learning partnerships • Developing learning approaches that link impact assessment, evaluation, outreach and project management
4. Ensure that UNIFEM personnel and financial and programme management systems support the goals and programmes of the organization effectively and efficiently	• Introduction of improved programming modalities (strategic planning workshops, programme approach, etc.) • Financial information management system installed and in use • Agreement for UNIFEM to recruit for specialist posts outside of UNDP achieved	• Adoption of results-based management • Project finance reports available on a monthly basis to management staff • All specialists positions filled or in the process of being filled	• Ensure systems development is responsive to specific UNIFEM needs while maintaining compliance with UNDP corporate standards

SBP Objectives[a]	*Short- term results*	*Medium-term results*	*Challenges*
5. Build a larger and more diversified resource base	• Continued increase in overall income over previous year throughout the SBP period • New and diverse sources of support, including from the private sector, identified and secured every year of the SBP period	• Increase in overall resource base from $17.2 million to $24.3 million between 1996 and 1999, or 41 per cent • Diversification of sources of support, including an increase in contributions from the private sector from $0.1 million in 1996 to $2.9 million in 1999	• Developing efficient and effective mechanisms to facilitate agreements with private sector organizations • Align work of UNIFEM national committees with organization's goals and strategies

[a] The SBP 1997-1999 contained six objectives. On the basis of reporting during the first two years, it was determined that because of their similarities, objectives 2 and 5 should be merged. Thus, the UNIFEM SBP is now guided by the five objectives listed here.

14. The United Nations reform agenda has stimulated new interest in and created mechanisms for greater inter-agency collaboration. With its focus on integrated conference follow-up and inter-agency coordination at global, regional and national levels, the United Nations reform agenda expands opportunities to leverage resources and political will, build capacity and link gender equality and women's empowerment to the mainstream development agenda. UNIFEM has taken advantage of this opportunity to create synergy by expanding its field network to support the resident coordinator system; by taking leadership of the UNDG sub-group on gender and of field-based inter-agency thematic groups on gender; by supporting the engendering of the guidelines for the common country assessment (CCA) and for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF); by taking the lead in innovative inter-agency initiatives such as the regional campaigns to end gender-based violence in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women. In addition, through Women Watch and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, UNIFEM is cooperating closely with the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and operational organizations — the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) — to make lessons learned and good practices more accessible to United Nations system partners.

15. The focus on inter-agency collaboration and integrated conference follow-up will continue to influence UNIFEM programming and strategies in the SBP 2000-2003. In particular, UNIFEM will seek collaborative arrangements that build on lessons learned during the first SBP from the joint initiatives begun with UNFPA (in placing gender, population and development advisers) and the United Nations Joint and Co-Sponsored Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (in sharing a staff member to strongly link work on HIV/AIDS with the UNIFEM empowerment and rights-based approach). These will continue in the second SBP. Efforts will be undertaken to strengthen and formalize relationships with UNDP, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank. In addition, UNIFEM will strengthen its own knowledge base and that of its partners by undertaking and disseminating the results of assessments of the ways in which inter-agency collaboration benefits gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives nationally and regionally by identifying the strategies that can be used to strengthen collaborative efforts further.

16. The UNDP change management and transition processes have brought to light a number of opportunities and challenges that can be explored to take advantage of the association of UNIFEM with UNDP, as defined in the UNIFEM mandate set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 39/125. A number of efforts during the last three years have

yielded important lessons: most notably, the distribution of Direct Line 11, which mandated that 20 per cent of the funding from the target for resource assignment from the core be used for women's empowerment and gender-mainstreaming initiatives and encouraged UNDP resident representatives to work closely with UNIFEM at the country level. The limited response to this initiative indicates the need to: (a) establish stronger coordination between UNIFEM and the UNDP gender focal point network; (b) increase understanding within UNDP of the mandate and comparative advantage of UNIFEM; and (c) establish stronger operational mechanisms that support cooperation between the two organizations. UNIFEM seeks the status of executing agency with UNDP in the immediate term with a view to providing more concrete programmatic backstopping and to creating a clear and comprehensible modality through which UNDP at the field and headquarters levels can contract for UNIFEM services and expertise in the areas of its comparative advantage. In the context of this revision and with a view to advancing the women's agenda, UNIFEM will be seeking access to other funding mechanisms available to United Nations organizations with executing status.

C. The five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action

17. Just as the Fourth World Conference on Women strongly influenced and added direction and purpose to the UNIFEM work programme, it is anticipated that the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action will likewise reaffirm, re-align and/or generate key priorities at the national, regional and global levels.

18. UNIFEM is actively engaged in providing support to both governmental and non-governmental activities in the assessment process leading up to the Special Session of the General Assembly to be held in June 2000 — Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-first Century. UNIFEM is a cooperating partner of many of the regional economic commissions for the planning of the regional preparatory meetings; is supporting NGO networks to undertake information campaigns to inform broad constituencies; and is using WomenWatch (in collaboration with DAW) to organize electronic discussion forums. In addition, UNIFEM will be launching the first issue of the biennial report entitled "Progress of the World's Women" at the Special Session. The report will identify inspiring examples of how countries and communities have moved forward on women's economic capacity-building and rights to contribute to gender equality. It will also provide an assessment of gaps and challenges that need to be confronted to improve the measurement and targets that underpin progress.

19. The SBP 2000-2003 has drawn on the priorities and trends that have already been identified in the regions in the course of the ongoing Beijing+5 preparatory process. They include a call for more concentrated implementation using a rights-based framework, new forms and tools for assessing accountability and progress, more specific targets that take into consideration existing models already developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and others, and a higher level of investment in gender-equality initiatives. In addition, Governments and NGOs note the importance of strengthening linkages between the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of other United Nations conferences, particularly with the World Summit for Social Development and the International Conference on Population and Development, in the context of poverty eradication. A consensus is also emerging on the importance of fostering common ground between Governments and NGOs towards moving forward the agenda of the Platform for Action and providing technical support to Governments in the implementation of national action plans.

20. UNIFEM considers the outcome and conclusions of Beijing+5 — and the gender-related outcomes of other five-year reviews of United Nations conferences — as the compass that will guide its programme priorities for the coming four years. It is therefore critical that UNIFEM have the capacity and resources to ensure immediate, concrete and sustained follow-up to the issues and opportunities identified through the Beijing+5 process and in the agenda for work suggested by "Progress of the World's Women".

IV. Opportunities and challenges in the external and internal environment

A. The external environment

21. The Beijing Platform for Action, which emerged from the broad consensus reached among Governments and NGOs, is overwhelmingly regarded as the agenda for the empowerment of women. In supporting this agenda, along with targets set at other United Nations global conferences, UNIFEM is challenged to assess how much progress has been achieved for women's empowerment. In a comparison of the human development index (HDI) and the gender development index (GDI), the most important conclusion is that gender inequality is a universal problem, persisting in rich as well as in poor countries (GDI values are lower than HDI values in all categories of countries). In addition, the gender empowerment measurement (GEM) is lower than the GDI for all categories of countries. This indicates that women in all parts of the world typically find that an increase in their capacities does not translate into an equivalent increase in their economic and political power.

22. The efforts invested to bring about systemic change for gender equality have achieved some reduction in gender stratification in certain situations although in some cases gender inequality remains constant or has actually increased. The question of how much change in gender equality and in what direction — increase or decrease — depends on a number of considerations:

(a) Women's status in different societies falls along a continuum that extends from relative gender equality to extensive female disadvantage. If development strategies are to succeed in reducing women's poverty and improving their status, underlying structures that perpetuate gender inequalities must be transformed. It is also essential to understand the dynamic relationship between economic and political processes that create and influence these structures and the place of women on the gender equality continuum;

(b) Conditions that tend to produce change in the degree of gender stratification must simultaneously address the micro, meso and macro levels, which interact with one another. For example, interactions within the family, a micro phenomenon, are shaped by economic opportunities, legal constraints, social expectations as well as class and ethnic systems, which are meso and macro structures and processes. In other words, changing gender hierarchies requires the incorporation of structures and processes from all levels;

(c) It is also important to learn how specific variables can trigger large-scale change in gender systems in the desired direction. Macro-structural changes, primarily in economic, political, legal and technological variables, have been known to trigger broad systemic change. For example, structures of the marketplace and models of development, which take into account what women do and how households behave, can positively affect systems of gender equality. The challenge is therefore to identify those variables that can leverage systemic change, taking into consideration the interplay between critical variables from the economic, political, social and cultural spheres;

(d) Specific inputs are required to create the enabling environment needed to achieve progress for gender equality. This would require allocation of public expenditure for social development, ensuring women's economic rights, investing in women's skills and knowledge, and ensuring the personal security and rights of women to lives free of violence and poverty;

(e) There is a need to remove policy and cultural biases as well as household-level constraints, which deny women access to economic resources, the rights to land or property, or the fair valuation of their work. At the same time, alternative approaches or a mix of interventions to promote women's economic and political empowerment are needed, such as policies in support of home-based workers, the creation of new markets for goods and services produced by women, and organizing women's associations;

(f) Support for leadership development is essential in ensuring that women acquire the skills and experience to prepare them for leadership positions. Strategic alliances and partnerships are also critical factors in increasing women's opportunities to participate and shape political decision-making.

23. The above considerations must be framed within specific regional and country contexts and within the development challenges and opportunities that have emerged as we enter the twenty-first century. Our changing world is currently being shaped by three

major phenomena, all of which have major consequences for women's lives: economic globalization, fragmentation, and problems without borders. They are examined below:

(a) *Economic globalization.* This consists of four components: finance, trade, investment and technology. As it currently exists, economic globalization can be seen as a restructuring of rights and the restructuring of relationships between monetized and non-monetized sectors. The Asian crisis and World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, in particular, have brought problems of globalization to the fore. Many women experience globalization not as an agent of progress, but as a force creating inequalities in the distribution of opportunities and resources among countries and within them. Women still constitute the majority of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor and for many women, globalization has not generated formal employment but has instead shifted their work to the informal and casual sectors.

There is a need to assist countries in their desire to develop new frameworks towards transforming globalization to become pro-poor and pro-women, a globalization that is more socially accountable. In doing so, advantage must be taken of new opportunities that are emerging in different types of markets (goods, labour, land, finance), as well as the particular nature of markets that dominate the economies of programme countries.

(b) *Fragmentation.* A parallel process to globalization is fragmentation along lines of ethnicity, language and religion. There are today more intra-state wars and conflicts than at any time in human history, leading to the breakdown of the social fabric in many countries as well as an increase in violence against women and girls. A global process of political restructuring is under way, characterized by different and often difficult transitional processes. This includes the rise of people's movements and alliances, a gradual move to democratization by many countries and an increase in the number of States that have grown weaker economically and have become debtor States. The increasing dominance of the market does not reduce the accountability of Governments to the people they represent. However, the weakening of State structures has also meant a weakening of checks and balances that can ensure this accountability in the process of bringing about an equal balance of resources and power between women and men.

These increasing political and social complexities call for effective interventions in the areas of peace-building, conflict resolution, building common ground between civil societies and States, the United Nations system and business communities, helping to rebuild institutions and capacities, and bringing international agreements and treaties to bear upon the operation of economic and political systems. Women have a critical role to play in all of these areas.

(c) *Problems without borders.* Along with economic globalization and fragmentation, the world has seen a rise in problems that know no borders. These include the globalization of criminal networks, the trafficking in women and children, drug trafficking and the arms trade. In addition, the world is today facing a rise in global environment problems, as well as the continuing spread of HIV/AIDS, a disease that has decimated the productive members of entire communities, leaving behind AIDS orphans in the care of the very old.

The challenge is to move away from competitive and short-term self-interest to a larger and long-term common good that is sustainable and equitable for all.

24. In addition to the larger social, economic and political forces that need to be taken into account, the UNIFEM programme relies on lessons learned from working in three contexts: with Governments; with non-governmental organizations, particularly women's organizations and networks; and with United Nations organizations. Over the past three years, UNIFEM has identified some key principles with regard to enabling and inhibiting factors in these three contexts. These factors will influence programme design and selection in the coming period.

25. With regard to Governments, UNIFEM has taken note of numerous areas in which progress has been made in generating increased political will and commitment. More than 100 countries have developed national plans of action as follow-up to Beijing and they will require assistance — both technical and financial — in implementing these. Progress in specific areas has also been encouraging. In the area of eliminating violence against women, for instance, the number of Governments that have made strong declarations and instituted programmes to address gender-based violence has increased considerably since 1995, albeit not as rapidly as is needed. In the area of economic empowerment, it should be noted that on

4 June 1996, at its eighty-third session, the General Conference of the International Labour Organization adopted the Home Work Convention, a milestone in recognizing women's home-based work and setting minimum standards and rights. In the work of engendering governance and leadership, it is notable that more than 50 Governments have instituted positive or affirmative action programmes to support an increase in women's political participation. The challenge for the SBP 2000-2003 is to maximize the potential of steps that Governments have taken and increase the positive impact on women's lives by strengthening micro- and meso-level mechanisms to support monitoring, documentation, assessment and replication.

26. With regard to NGOs, including women's organizations and networks, UNIFEM has found that in countries where non-governmental institutions are strong and concerned with gender issues, it is possible to build strong collaboration to support gender-equality initiatives. At the same time, UNIFEM is also witnessing a weakening in the resources available to support women's organizations and networks to build capacity and sustainable institutions. This is of particular concern, given the key role that women's organizations and networks have played in putting gender issues on national and international agendas, and in training new generations of advocates for gender equality. The challenge for the next phase of the UNIFEM SBP is to use opportunities to leverage more resources to support programming and sustainability strategies of key women's organizations and networks. Effort also will need to be devoted to supporting their skill-building strategies to foster leadership, networking, and policy advocacy, including through the use of new information and communication technologies and techniques.

27. With regard to United Nations organizations, UNIFEM experience has demonstrated that productive partnerships are greatly facilitated where there is strong commitment in the leadership of the United Nations country team or the headquarters offices. The evidence of this was demonstrated, most dramatically, in the inter-agency campaigns that UNIFEM convened to promote an end to gender-based violence. In these campaigns, the commitment of the resident coordinators and heads of agencies in the field was central to the ability to convey a consistent message with regard to the determination of the United Nations to support government and NGO action to end violence against women. At the same time, high-level commitment is not sufficient. The Administrator's Direct Line 11, for example, needed to be backed by operational modalities that would support its implementation in the field. The challenge for SBP 2000-2003 is to use UNIFEM experience to enrich, enhance and stimulate the work of United Nations country teams. This will require strong partnerships with the gender networks that already exist within different United Nations organizations as well as an expansion of UNIFEM networks and capacities. As with Governments, it is also critical to strengthen the monitoring and accountability mechanisms that support realistic assessments of progress and challenges.

B. The internal environment

28. In its SBP 1997-1999, the Fund noted that the key factor influencing its internal environment was its "highly dedicated and qualified staff, who have a strong corporate commitment to the UNIFEM mandate ... The diversity of skills, backgrounds, experience and leadership capacity of UNIFEM staff are a critical asset to the organization." This is equally true for the SBP 2000-2003.

29. UNIFEM seeks constantly to renew and update the skills, capacities and commitment of staff and to ensure that the internal system supports the effective and efficient design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of programmes and partnerships. The following will be of critical importance in the SBP 2000-2003:

(a) **Alignment of performance evaluations and incentive systems with the values, visions and strategies that underpin the organization's work.** UNIFEM collaboration with consultants who have expertise in knowledge management and in building learning organizations over the past three years has demonstrated the importance of an aligned organization. The Directorate has made considerable investment over the past three years to ensure that all staff have a deep understanding of the core organizational goals and strategies that underpin programmes. This has increased the focused, strategic nature of UNIFEM programming. However, it has become apparent that the performance evaluation and incentive systems used by larger United Nations organizations are not suitable for the staff and

competencies that UNIFEM hopes to promote in its work. Evaluation and feedback approaches that are participatory and consistent with transformational leadership principles will be incorporated into the system. This will be a priority over the next four years;

(b) **State-of-the-art information and management systems**. In the past three years, UNIFEM has made considerable progress in upgrading its financial management information system. The challenge for SBP 2000-2003 is to complete the design phase and then field-test and operationalize the project management information system. UNIFEM is increasingly using Internet-based capacities for outreach (through web sites and e-mail bulletins) and consultation (through electronic forums and dialogues). While this results in both cost-savings and increased reach, it makes it more critical than ever that each node in the UNIFEM field network has access to the most current information technology and skills. Increasing the use of intranets, video-conferencing and other electronic communications will be critical to the future planning and management capacities of UNIFEM;

(c) **Increased investments in staff training and capacity-building**. It is more critical than ever that staff at all levels have the opportunity to grow and learn in ways that are consistent with new organizational challenges. The organization plans to invest a maximum of 5 per cent of personnel costs in staff training and capacity-building. A variety of options will be provided, e.g., groups of staff will receive specially tailored training in technical and substantive areas such as the innovative use of Internet-based technologies, documenting the project implementation process and establishing impact assessments, using a participatory and rights-based approach. At the same time, staff will be encouraged to identify specialized short courses and other opportunities to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

V. Strategic objectives in the UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003

30. As noted in chapter I, the overarching goals and objectives of the proposed UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan will remain the same. The activities and approaches will be adapted and altered in keeping with lessons learned during the implementation of the previous plan.

31. UNIFEM will reinforce the use of programme selection criteria during the next four years as a means of continuously focusing its work and of ensuring a manageable and strategic portfolio of initiatives. Programme selection will focus on those initiatives that:

(a) Support national efforts and capacity to implement and monitor progress on the Beijing Platform for Action, taking into account the development challenges, opportunities, and evolving needs of countries and communities;

(b) Build coherent and strong institutions and networks with effective leadership and sufficient political clout and resources to advance a development agenda that meets the international development targets for gender set at various United Nations conferences, and shape emerging economic and political dialogues and frameworks, with a focus on trade, finance, and technology to ensure that they are pro-poor and pro-women;

(c) Establish strategic alliances and synergistic partnerships with Governments, United Nations organizations, women's groups, media, and the private sector to support, implement, and monitor policy and legal frameworks for gender equality;

(d) Further social mobilization, advocacy, and leveraging of political will and financial resources for Governments and women's organizations to ensure gender equality and decision-making at all levels;

(e) Support the catalytic role of UNIFEM in the development cooperation activities of the United Nations system to engender poverty-reduction strategies and indicators, macroeconomic frameworks and budgets, create women-friendly markets in the context of globalization and new information technology, making sure that efforts to humanize globalization address women's needs and concerns;

(f) Pilot innovative approaches to promote women's economic security and rights through particular interventions or a mix of interventions, including: financial and technical services to women workers; appropriate policies and structures in support of women workers; organizing women workers into trade associations or solidarity groups;

(g) Support innovative mechanisms, programmes, and partnerships to end violence against women, addressing the causes of violence, systems of protection and prevention, the engendering of criminal justice systems and supporting services for women who have experienced violence, such as women-friendly police stations;

(h) Stimulate knowledge development and the building of knowledge communities (on ending violence against women, reducing poverty, curtailing armed conflict, and implementing CEDAW) using information technology to bring new energy, purpose, and experiences to United Nations deliberations and to help countries to put in place the strategies needed to achieve the international development targets from a gendered experience.

32. The five objectives of the SBP 2000-2003 are set out below, with general observations on the nature of proposed activities and remarks on how these activities have changed from those in the previous plan. Table 2 of the addendum to the present report contains a more detailed description of the strategic areas of focus and anticipated results.

Objective 1: Increase options and opportunities for women, especially women living in poverty, through focused programming in three thematic areas

33. As in the previous SBP, UNIFEM work will focus on three thematic areas: supporting women's economic capacities and rights; engendering governance and leadership; promoting women's human rights and eliminating violence against women. New areas of emphasis for this strategic objective, in the next four years, will include:

(a) Stronger linkages between themes so that, for instance, issues of economic governance, rights-based approaches to conflict prevention and resolution, and the costs of violence can be more thoroughly explored in UNIFEM programming;

(b) Concentrated efforts to link macro-, meso- and micro-level activities in all UNIFEM thematic areas;

(c) A strengthened focus on ensuring understanding and implementation of global agreements, conventions and treaties that concern women, including the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the Covenant on Economic and Social Rights;

(d) Greater investments in developing tools, processes, and national capacities to assess progress and accountability on globally agreed commitments relating to UNIFEM thematic areas. This will involve tracking (i) UNIFEM investments in creating new structures to support gender-mainstreaming and women's empowerment (such as women's networks and associations, women's machineries and gender units) and (ii) UNIFEM efforts to change laws and policies (such as new allocations to support women's shelters or instituting positive action policies to promote women's political participation).

Objective 2: Strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to support women's empowerment and gender-mainstreaming in its policies and programmes

34. UNIFEM is operating in an environment that is significantly different from the one it confronted in 1997. The United Nations reform agenda, the creation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), and Economic and Social Council resolutions affirming the importance of integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations world conferences, all contribute to a favourable climate in which UNIFEM can lend its support and expertise to encourage gender-mainstreaming. In addition, UNIFEM now has two years of experience in backstopping an expanded and diverse gender support network that includes regional programme directors, senior gender advisers, UNV gender specialists, and UNIFEM/UNFPA gender, population and development advisers. New areas of focus for 2000-2003 will include:

(a) Concentrated attention to ensure that gender is firmly incorporated into the United Nations inter-agency mechanisms such as CCAs and UNDAFs, UNDG thematic groups and inter-agency groups at the country level;

(b) Innovative approaches to backstopping the expanding field network of gender advisers and specialists, including through the use of new

information communication technologies, learning via the Internet and other mechanisms;

(c) Strategic assessments of inter-agency support mechanisms and networks that focus on mainstreaming gender as a means of continuously keeping the system informed of its progress.

Objective 3: Strengthen UNIFEM effectiveness by incorporating the principles of a learning organization and building strategic partnerships that enhance field-based operations

35. In the 1997-1999 SBP, UNIFEM strengthened the awareness and understanding of staff and partners with regard to the importance of UNIFEM becoming a learning organization and began to devise and experiment with systems for supporting organizational learning. UNIFEM experience in organizing on-line discussion conferences, its undertaking of thematic and programme evaluations, and its continuation of regular strategic planning enhanced these efforts. In the next SBP, the emphasis will be on strengthening linkages and synergy between the organization's evaluation, impact assessment, management information systems, public education strategies, and learning organization programmes, practice and principles. UNIFEM will build further on the potential of new information/communication technologies to support cross-national, regional, and global knowledge communities that are working to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality. In all of this work, UNIFEM will explore strengthened and new partnerships — with the private sector, programme and donor countries, women's organizations and multilateral organizations — to promote collective learning that supports gender-equality initiatives.

Objective 4: Ensure that UNIFEM personnel and financial and programme management systems support the goals and programmes of the organization effectively and efficiently

36. In a constantly changing world, an organization needs to adopt flexible rules and procedures that allow it to respond to emerging needs with innovative approaches. It needs to be able to identify new requirements and to learn from past experiences on how best to respond to them. At the same time, an organization needs to combine clear, effective operational modalities with reliable management and control systems to maintain accountability in the use of its resources. UNIFEM intends to meet these challenges through this objective. In particular, UNIFEM will continue to align the experience of its staff to emerging substantive requirements, streamline recruitment procedures and develop and implement a comprehensive staff development plan. It will establish or strengthen operational arrangements that support its cooperation with other United Nations organizations, notably by acting as executing agency for relevant UNDP projects and by entering into management agreements with organizations such as the United Nations Office for Project Services, entrusting them with the administrative tasks relating to programme support while concentrating on the provision of its specialized expertise. Finally, it will develop and apply a project management system responsive to the specific needs of UNIFEM and compatible with the UNDP corporate Financial Information Management System (FIMS).

Objective 5: Build a larger and more diversified resource base

37. Current indications are that UNIFEM resources will continue to grow. This trend will be actively encouraged through the promotion of strengthened and new partnerships with bilateral donors and various partners in the private sector, and through the promotion of innovative fund-raising strategies.

38. In table 2 of the addendum, UNIFEM presents two separate scenarios for income growth during the SBP 2000-2003. The first envisages an overall growth rate of 20 per cent per annum, comprising a slightly higher growth rate of 25 per cent for income from multilateral and private sources than for government sources. A less ambitious scenario foresees an overall 10 per cent growth rate with a correspondingly 15 per cent increase in income from multilateral and private sources.

VI. Additional comments

39. The addendum to the present report (DP/2000/15/Add.1) provides detailed substantive information and is an integral component of the UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003. The addendum consists of the following:

(a) Table 1 provides a sampling of results achieved in the UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan, 1997-1999, which set the context and rationale for the SBP 2000-2003;

(b) Table 2 details the selected areas of support of the SBP 2000-2003, listing strategic objectives and anticipated results, as well as possible indicators that will be taken into account in measuring progress. The list of indicators includes a combination of those that can be derived from existing efforts of countries and international organizations to gather data disaggregated by sex, as well as a small number of indicators that UNIFEM may track in selected programmes and projects;

N.B. UNIFEM is working to develop and apply more effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure the results and impact of its work. An important first step has been taken in "Progress of the World's Women", which will provide an analysis of the gaps and challenges that need to be confronted to improve the measurement and targets that underpin progress. The selection of indicators that UNIFEM will track over the SBP 2000-2003 will be strongly informed by this work;

(c) Charts 1-4 provide comparative information on UNIFEM income by source (government, multilateral and private sector) as well as by type (core, cost-sharing and trust funds) for the years 1997-1999. Also included are income projections for the years 2000-2003 (scenarios of a 10 per cent and a 20 per cent increase in income);

(d) Chart 5 provides a comparison between projects from all sources over the years 1994-1996 and 1997-1999, showing that the shift to the programme approach resulted in fewer projects with a higher average budget per project;

(e) Charts 6-7 present a disaggregated picture of project approvals by sources allocated by theme and by region for the years 1997-1999.

VII. Executive Board action

40. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. *Endorse* the programme focus, strategies and targets set out in the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003 of the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

2. *Also endorse* the United Nations Development Fund for Women as the centre of excellence within the operational activities for development of the United Nations system for innovative and catalytic programmes promoting women's political and economic empowerment and gender equality;

3. *Recommend* that the Administrator include the United Nations Development Fund for Women as an organization to which execution responsibility for the United Nations Development Programme projects can be entrusted;

4. *Urge* the international community to continue to increase its support and contributions to the United Nations Development Fund for Women and to make available the additional resources required for the implementation of the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003.